

REMARKS

Claims 11-22 are pending in the application. The Examiner has objected to Claims 13 and 20 for informalities. By this amendment, Applicants are submitting amendments to Claims 13 and 20 to correct the informalities. Applicants believe that the amendments address the Examiner's concerns and respectfully request withdrawal of the objections.

The Examiner has rejected Claims 13-17 under 35 USC 112, as being indefinite since Claim 13 recites "the retrieving step", for which there was no antecedent basis. The Examiner has correctly assumed that "the retrieving step" language of Claim 13 refers to the "program subsequently searches" language of Claim 12, from which Claim 13 depends. By this amendment, Applicants have amended the language of Claim 12 to appropriately provide the antecedent basis. Applicants believe that the amendments address the indefiniteness concerns and respectfully request withdrawal of the rejections under 35 USC 112.

Applicants respectfully contest the Examiner's assertion that a "pager" and a "beeper" are one and the same. Applicants assert that a pager can comprise an electronic component which is not a beeper. Applicants note that two distinct dependent claims, reciting a pager and a beeper respectively, were allowed in the patent which issued on the parent application, USP

6,356,964. Accordingly, Applicants request reconsideration of the interpretation of the limitations of Claims 14 and 15.

The Examiner has rejected Claims 11-13, 16, and 18-19 under 35 USC 102(e) as anticipated by Peckover; and, has rejected Claims 14-15, 17, and 20-22 under 35 USC 103 as unpatentable over Peckover. For the reasons set forth below, Applicants believe that the claims are patentable over the cited art.

The presently-claimed invention provides a method and computer program data structure for enabling a user to provide input values to a running program prior to the program requesting those input values. The method steps, as recited in Claim 11, include maintaining a bag buffer of variable/value pairs in the program; receiving a communication, including input values, from the user; and temporarily storing said input values in the bag buffer. Similarly, the structure as recited in Claim 18 comprises an output buffer for storing output values to be displayed to a user; a bag buffer for storing variable/value pairs for use by the program; an input buffer for storing values for which user input of variables is required; and a program state buffer for storing at least the present state of the program.

The Peckover patent is directed to gathering and analyzing market transaction data using software agents, most notably the Agent System 10, the Provider Personal Agent 13 and the Consumer Personal Agent 12. The cited teachings specifically describe a YO998-210X

Preference Manager function 54, a subcomponent of the Personal Agent, which maintains data about the preferences of the user and which may additionally automatically update the preference data in response to user instructions. The Preference Manager "uses preference data to order search results, so that items that are more likely to be preferred by the user will be displayed first when the [search] results are delivered to the user". While Peckover teaches that preference datum comprises a value 72 and a key 70, Peckover goes on to teach that "[o]nly keys that are relevant to a particular user are included in that user's preferences".

Applicants respectfully assert that the Peckover teachings regarding storing user preferences do not anticipate or obviate the invention as claimed. Peckover states that preference datum comprises values and keys, but then states that keys may not be stored. Accordingly, Peckover does not teach that variable/value pairs be stored. Further, while Peckover stores user preference data to use for ordering search results, that preference data is not used in executing the search program. In contrast, the present invention stores variable/value pairs for use in executing the program.

Applicants respectfully assert that Peckover does not store variable/value pairs of data, which data is needed for execution of the program (Claims 11 and 19, and all of the claims, Claims 12-17 and 20-22, which depend respectively therefrom). The
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stored variable/value pairs of the present invention are provided by the user and stored for use by the program while the program is running, but prior to when the program actually needs the variables/values (Claim 11 and Claims 12-17 which depend therefrom). Since the variable/value pairs are pre-stored, the program can access that information when it needs it, rather than waiting to prompt a user and receive user input of the needed information (Claims 12-17). The Applicants have amended that language of independent claim, Claims 11, to highlight the distinctions over the Peckover system, and respectfully assert that the amended claim language is not anticipated by Peckover.

Applicants direct the Examiner's attention to the fact that Claim 11, and Claims 12-17 which depend therefrom, expressly recite that the step for storing variable/value pairs in the bag buffer is storing the pairs in the program. Further Claim 19, and Claims 20-22 which depend therefrom, expressly recite that the bag buffer is a component of the computer program data structure. In contrast, the Peckover passage regarding storing user preference data states that the Preference Manager stores the user preference data, separate from the search program of the Agent 10, and separate from the Decision Agent program 14. Clearly the claim language is not anticipated by such teachings.

Applicants further note that Claims 18-22 additionally recite "a program state buffer for storing at least the present state of the program". Applicants have reviewed the cited
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Peckover teachings and fail to see where Peckover provides any teachings regarding storing the present state of a program, let alone in conjunction with the storage of variable/value pairs of information for use in executing that program.

It is well established under U. S. Patent Law that, for a reference to anticipate claim language under 35 USC 102, that reference must teach each and every claim feature. Since the Peckover patent does not teach a bag buffer, as part of a program, does not teach storing variable/value pairs in the bag buffer for use in executing the program, does not teach the program accessing the stored values in the bag buffer before requesting input from the user, does not teach automatically accessing variables, and updating or disposing of input values, in response to a request for variables by the program, and does not teach a program state buffer in conjunction with input and output buffers, it cannot be maintained that the Peckover patent anticipates the invention as claimed.

Applicants further assert that the Peckover patent does not obviate the invention as set forth in the pending claims. Applicants have responded to the Examiner's assertion that Claims 14-17 use nonfunctional descriptive language by amending the claims to recite method steps. Further, Applicants contend that the Peckover mention of using electronic means to notify a user refers to generating a display (i.e., a prompt) to the user via the same interface with which the user is presently interacting.

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Peckover does not teach or suggest notifying a user with electronic means other than the present interface. Moreover, Peckover clearly does not provide such notifying in conjunction with the additionally recited claim features of maintaining the bag buffer, receiving a communication, temporarily storing the input values, searching the bag buffer, and updating variables and/or disposing of input values. Clearly, therefore, Peckover does not teach or suggest the invention as set forth in Claims 14-17.

With regard to Claims 20-22, Applicants disagree with the Examiner's basis for rejecting the claim language. While "nonfunctional descriptive language" was an appropriate rejection to apply to the method claims depending from Claim 11, it is not appropriate to reject apparatus language on the same basis. Claims 20-22 are apparatus (e.g., structure) claims which recite further limitations to the bag buffer of Claim 18 from which Claims 20-22 depend. An array data structure, a hash table data structure, and a tuple space data structure are all structurally distinct. Applicants believe, therefore, that the Examiner has not appropriately provided a basis for rejecting Claims 20-22. Applicants further note that no prior art teachings have been cited against the language of Claims 20-22. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the rejections of these claims. Applicants believe that the response to this reconsideration request should be in the form of a *non-final*

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response, since the Examiner did not appropriately provide any rejection of Claims 20-22 to which Applicants can respond.

Based on the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request entry of the amendments, reconsideration of the rejections, withdrawal of the rejections, and issuance of the claims.

Respectfully submitted,
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